

**BRNO Declaration on the Debate about the Masters' Houses Ensemble in Dessau
7 June 2008 – docomomo Deutschland e.V.**

The long-running, experimental debate on the ensemble of Masters' Houses in Dessau and the Gropius House / Emmer House, which currently appears to be under time pressure and a need to succeed, has elicited the following declaration from docomomo Deutschland e.V.

Architectural plans for the ensemble of Masters' Houses should pay due heed to the following:

1. The historical situation and the authenticity of time and place should not be misrepresented, but support rendered to their perceptibility.
2. The creative potential of contemporary art and architecture should be used *in this sense* and given increased encouragement as constituting a forward-looking, cultural contribution to a differentiated approach to Modernist buildings.

We regard a reconstruction of the buildings as they were in 1926 as being no less misguided than projects for the construction of new buildings, the purpose of which is to eliminate the existing fabric that is so extraordinarily illustrative of Modernist architecture. Both positions pose a threat to the complexity and historicity of this location in that they entail the obliteration of the historical traces legible in the existing buildings in favour of a statement which, while aesthetically succinct, foreshortens and falsifies history."

The reduction of Modernist architecture to a timeless aesthetic concept flies in the face of both the historical circumstances of the 1920s and the all-embracing technical, constructional, social and artistic approach of architects at that time. docomomo, as a network of architects, urban preservationists, curators of monuments, academics, artists, intellectuals and people with an interest in Modernism, considers a cautious and careful approach to monument conservation to be just as important for such an pre-eminent Modernist architectural site as confidence in sustainable, forward-looking and creative contemporary interventions.

The general meeting of docomomo Deutschland in BRNO in June 2008 does not regard the reconstruction of the destroyed buildings in the Masters' Houses ensemble as an appropriate way of addressing the Modernist heritage and explicitly calls for patience, circumspection and caution in the handling of the existing fabric. Current deficiencies of an urban planning and architectural nature can only be remedied by contemporary artistic and architectural designs which respect the special characteristics of the location and incorporate the findings of architectural and building research.